

In re Patent Application of
CLARK ET AL.
Serial No. 10/787,515
Filed: **FEBRUARY 26, 2004**

REMARKS

Applicants thank the Examiner for the careful and thorough examination of the present application, and the Board for carefully considering Applicants' arguments.

As detailed herein, Applicants have accepted the Board's helpful suggestions and have amended independent Claims 1, 9, 14, and 17 to more clearly define the claimed invention over the prior art.

Applicants submit that all claims are patentable, present arguments and amendments herein supporting such patentability, and respectfully request that the Examiner withdraw all pending rejections and allow all claims.

I. The Amended Claims

Independent Claim 1 is directed to a communications system comprising a plurality of account databases each for storing information associated with different accounts, and a central database for storing location information associating each account with a respective account database, and also for storing shared system setup information. The system also includes at least one communications device for accessing account information, and an interface device. The interface device is for receiving an account access request from the at least one communications device for a desired account, for retrieving account location information from the central database for the desired account, and initially interfacing the at least one communications device with the respective account database associated with the desired account based thereon.

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Claim 1 has been amended to recite the interface device is for caching the account location information and using the cached account location information for interfacing the at least one communications device with the respective account database subsequent to the initial interfacing of the at least one communications device. Support for this claim amendment is found at paragraphs 23-24 of the present application. The interface device also retrieves and caches the shared system setup information for use in interfacing the at least one communications device with the respective account database.

Independent Claim 9 is directed to an interface device sub-combination, and has been amended similarly. Independent Claim 14 is directed to a method counterpart to Claim 1, and has been amended similarly. Independent Claim 17 is directed to a related computer-readable medium, and has been amended similarly.

II. The Amended Claims Are Patentable

The Examiner rejected independent Claims 1, 9, 14, and 17 over Rierden et al. Rierden et al. discloses a subscriber management system that includes at least one Data Directory Server (DDS) located between one or more transaction generators and one or more data servers. The DDS routes transactions and provides data location functions. Based upon internal rules within the DDS and the particular transaction type, the DDS routes transactions to the appropriate servers. Transactions are classified according to where they may be

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executed. Specifically, transactions may be classified as SPECIFIC, ANY, or ALL. (Col. 4, lines 11-28).

The system of Rierden et al. further comprises an X-REF server for storing the location information, global tables, so the DDS accesses the correct data server based upon the data needed by the transaction request. (Col. 8, lines 31-39). Rierden et al. discloses that the DDS may either access the global tables on the X-REF server on a per transaction basis or at start-up, by loading the entire global table for full and complete operation. (Col. 8, lines 40-50; Col. 9, lines 8-13).

In the Decision on Appeal, the Board took the position that the claimed invention required no order of steps between the caching and the interfacing. Pursuant to this helpful clarification of the Board, Applicants have amended independent Claim 1, for example, to recite the interface device is for retrieving account location information from the central database for the desired account and initially interfacing the communications device, and for caching the account location information and using the cached account location information for interfacing the communications device with the respective account database subsequent to the initial interfacing of the communications device. Differently, the system of Rierden et al. either loads the entire global table (irrespective of the previous transactions, since none have occurred at startup) from the X-REF server to the DDS at startup, or accesses the global table using a per transaction approach.

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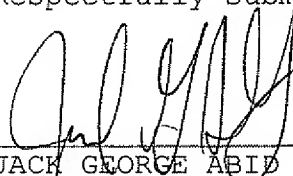
Accordingly, it is submitted that amended independent Claims 1, 9, 14, and 17 are patentable over the prior art. Their respective dependent claims, which recite yet further distinguishing features, are also patentable over the prior art and require no further discussion herein.

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CONCLUSIONS

In view of the amendments to the claims and the arguments presented above, it is submitted that all of the claims are patentable. Accordingly, a Notice of Allowance is respectfully requested in due course. Should any minor informalities need to be addressed, the Examiner is encouraged to contact the undersigned at the telephone number listed below.

Respectfully submitted,



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